

CHAPTER 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Carlsbad Municipal Water District (CMWD) and Carlsbad Sewer District (CSD) propose to implement the Water and Sewer Master Plan Updates. The existing Water Master Plan and Sewer Master Plan were adopted by the City of Carlsbad in 1990 and 1992, respectively. The current project represents an update to both of these planning documents. This Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addresses the potential environmental consequences of the updated Master Plan projects.

The CMWD and CSD are responsible for the respective maintenance, operations, and management of water distribution and sewer collection systems in the City of Carlsbad (City). Each District proposes to implement an update to their Master Plan for the provision of infrastructure services throughout the City. The Water Master Plan and Sewer Master Plan represent comprehensive programs for the phased and orderly development of water and sewer utilities for future needs of the City. They consist of individual capital improvement projects to construct new facilities and modify or expand existing facilities that would be needed to implement the Master Plans. (Note: Once constructed, the facilities remain as a part of the Master Plan; they do not get removed from the Master Plan once built.)

The CMWD Board of Directors is the decision-making body for the CMWD. The Carlsbad City Council is the decision-making body for the CSD. Together, CMWD and CSD will be Co-Lead Agencies in preparing this Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) statutes (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, § 21000 et seq., as amended) and implementing State CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., Title 14, § 15000 et seq., 1998).

1.1.1 Carlsbad Municipal Water District

The CMWD water service area covers approximately 85 percent of the City and includes an area of approximately 32 square miles. Primary land uses in the service area include industrial, residential, and agricultural uses. All of CMWD's water is supplied through four San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) treated water aqueduct connections. The CMWD is totally dependent on the SDCWA supply for potable water needs. Storage is provided by 11 enclosed reservoirs, one reservoir not in use, and one dam (Maerkle Dam).

CMWD's water distribution system includes over 230 miles of distribution mains 6 inches in diameter and larger. The water mains begin at each of the four SDCWA connections and move westward. In addition, four booster pump stations exist in the CMWD system, although one is inactive. Other components within the CMWD system include pressure reducing stations, a number of water wells, a hydro generation facility at Maerkle Reservoir, and two disinfection facilities.

1.1.2 Carlsbad Sewer District

The CSD, previously known as the Carlsbad Sanitary District, provides sewer service to the Carlsbad area. Portions of the City's existing conveyance system date back as far as 1929. The CSD wastewater service area covers approximately 70 percent of the City limits. Sewer service to the southeast corner of the City is provided by the Leucadia Wastewater District (LWD), and the Vallecitos Water District (VWD) provides service to the Meadowlark area along the eastern City limit.

The service area is comprised of five major drainage basins, which extend from approximately the eastern service area boundary, and drain west to the coast and ultimately to the Encina Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF). These sewage drainage basins are defined by the existing and planned interceptors within the City of Carlsbad. In addition to the gravity interceptors, a number of lift stations are required to convey wastewater flows to the Encina WPCF.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Program EIR is to assess and disclose potential impacts to the physical environment associated with construction and operation of the proposed updates to the Water and Sewer Master Plans. This document provides program-level, and in some cases project-level, information for consideration by decision-makers and the general public.

This Program EIR focuses on the 10 issue areas of Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology and Soils; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use and Planning; Noise; and Transportation/Traffic. Other issue areas, including Public Services and Recreation, are not evaluated in detail in *Chapter 4.0* of this Program EIR and are addressed as required by CEQA in *Section 6.4* (Effects Not Found to be Significant).

Chapter 2.0 describes the project in detail, including the project's objectives and characteristics. *Chapter 3.0* provides the existing environmental setting. The Environmental Analysis section of the Program EIR (*Chapter 4.0*) addresses each relevant issue in detail by describing existing conditions, discussing potential impacts and their significance, and proposing mitigation measures to avoid or reduce identified significant impacts. The mitigation measures will be incorporated into a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) to be adopted by the Districts as conditions of approval for the project. Cumulative impacts are assessed in *Chapter 5.0*, and other considerations required by CEQA are discussed in *Chapter 6.0*. Alternatives to the proposed project are addressed in *Chapter 7.0*. *Chapter 8.0* identifies the list of preparers, and *Chapter 9.0* provides the references used in the preparation of this document.

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

This Program EIR has been prepared by the CMWD and CSD in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, as amended. An EIR is an informational document that is designed to inform decision-makers, other responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of the potential environmental effects of a proposed project; to examine and implement methods of eliminating or reducing any potentially adverse impacts; and to consider alternatives to the project as proposed. While CEQA requires that major consideration be given to avoiding environmental damage, the lead agency(ies) must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including economic and social goals, in determining whether and in what manner a project should be approved.

To identify key issues and concerns relevant to the scope of the Program EIR, the Districts encouraged participation in the environmental review process from public agencies, special interest groups, and the general public. A major component of this process is public scoping. Scoping is a process designed to determine the breadth of issues to be addressed in the Program EIR. The aspects of the public scoping discussed in this section include the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and areas of controversy identified as a result of public scoping.

1.3.1 Notice of Preparation

The State CEQA Guidelines include requirements for an early and open process to

determine the scope of issues that should be addressed prior to implementation of a proposed action (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15082 and 15083). The Districts initiated the scoping process on April 28, 2003 through issuance of an NOP that included distribution to the State Clearinghouse (SCH) at the California Office of Planning and Research. The SCH monitors compliance of state agencies in providing timely responses and assigned state identification number (SCH #2003051014) to this EIR. The NOP is included in *Appendix A*.

The NOP provided notification to all federal, state, and local agencies involved with funding or approval of the project, and to other interested organizations and members of the public, that an EIR will be prepared for this project. The NOP was intended to encourage interagency communication concerning the proposed action and provide sufficient background information about the proposed action so that agencies, organizations, and individuals could respond with specific comments and questions on the scope and content of the Program EIR.

The Districts held a 30-day public review period to solicit comments on the NOP, beginning on April 28 and ending on June 1, 2003. *Appendix A* contains the eight comment letters received in response to the NOP.

1.3.2 Use of the Program EIR

A Program EIR will be used to analyze the first-tier effects of the Master Plan Updates. First-tier EIRs typically cover issues in a broad generalized level of analysis. A Program EIR is typically used for an agency program or series of actions that can be characterized as one large project. Typically, such a project involves actions that are closely related geographically (Cal. Code of Regs., Title 14, § 15168(a)(1)), for agency programs (§ 15168(a)(3)), or as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways (§ 15168(a)(4)). Program EIRs generally analyze broad environmental effects of the program with the acknowledgment that site-specific environmental review may be required for particular aspects of portions of the program when those aspects are proposed for implementation (§ 15168(a)).

Once the Program EIR is prepared for the Master Plan Updates, subsequent (or second-tier) activities within the program must be evaluated to determine whether an additional CEQA document needs to be prepared. When the subsequent activities involve site-specific operations, the City would use a written checklist to document its determination

whether the environmental effects of the operation were covered in the Program EIR. If the Program EIR addresses the program's effects as specifically and comprehensively as possible, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the Program EIR scope and additional environmental documentation would not be required (§ 15168(c)).

If a subsequent activity would have effects that are not within the scope of the Program EIR, the City of Carlsbad would need to prepare a new Initial Study leading to either a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an EIR. Subsequent CEQA documents would incorporate by reference the general discussions from this broader Program EIR, primarily concentrating on the issues specific to the action being evaluated.

At the time the Initial Study is performed, the appropriate responsible agency or agencies would be identified. Such agencies would be noticed of the City's intention to implement or approve the project at the time of public noticing of any such intent to approve or implement the project. The Initial Study is prepared to analyze whether the subsequent project may cause any significant effect on the environment that was not examined in the Program EIR and whether the subsequent project was described in the Program EIR as being within the scope of the Program EIR.

If the lead agency, based on the Initial Study, determines that a proposed subsequent project would have no additional effect on the environment that was not identified in the Program EIR and that no new or additional mitigation measures or alternatives may be required, the lead agency is to make a written finding based upon the information contained in the Initial Study that the subsequent project is within the scope of the project covered by the Program EIR.

Additional procedures for analyzing second-tier projects are described in *Section 4.0*.

1.4 AREAS OF KNOWN CONTROVERSY

Commentors on the NOP expressed concerns about potential impacts to energy resources, archaeological resources, biological resources including wetlands, sensitive plant and animal species, and impacts to the Agua Hedionda Lagoon. These concerns have been identified as areas of known controversy and are analyzed in *Chapter 4.0* (Environmental Analysis).

In addition, comments were received expressing the desire for coordination with the San Diego County Water Authority (Authority) and Poseidon Resources, who is proposing a water desalination plant in the City of Carlsbad. Commentors expressed the need to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed desalination project (including its impacts on water supply). However, it is beyond the scope of this EIR to analyze the potential desalination facility for several reasons.

As one of the largest proposed desalination projects on the U.S. West Coast, it is uncertain whether the project would ever be constructed due to its location adjacent to sensitive coastal resources and high cost. The project considers several alternatives for pipelines and pump facilities throughout the City of Carlsbad and in adjacent jurisdictions, although the location and sizing of these facilities has not yet been decided. To determine impacts on water supply, more precise information on the proposed routing and size of these lines would be required. Also, it is unknown at this time whether the proposed desalination project would co-mingle desalinated water with other drinking water in the same pipelines, or whether new and separate pipelines would need to be constructed by the Authority. Further, the proposed desalination facility plans are still subject to change in the near future, making it infeasible for the Water and Sewer Master Plan Updates EIR analysis to remain current with the desalination facility plans. For these reasons, the project is considered to be highly uncertain, both in its totality and in the specific facilities which would be required (*e.g.*, pipelines, pumps, other associated facilities). Thus, it would be infeasible to adequately analyze the desalination facility in this Master Plan program-level document. The desalination project is currently being analyzed in a separate project EIR being prepared by the Authority. Project-specific information regarding the size, location, and nature of the desalination facility including potential impacts to water supply, and appropriate alternatives will be analyzed in that document.

1.5 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The CMWD and CSD are the co-lead agencies for this proposed project and have been coordinating with the following agencies and organization:

- ! California Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego, Region 9)
- ! City of Oceanside
- ! City of San Marcos
- ! U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ! California Department of Fish and Game

- ! San Diego Archaeological Society
- ! Native American Heritage Commission
- ! California Office of Historic Preservation
- ! California Department of Transportation, District 11
- ! SDG&E
- ! Encina Wastewater Authority
- ! San Diego County Water Authority
- ! Vallecitos Water District
- ! Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation
- ! Leucadia Wastewater District

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK